

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 10, 2024

PREPARED BY: Michael Rowe, City Engineer

SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE CITY OF PALM DESERT
STANDARD DETAILS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Adopt a resolution entitled, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING UPDATED CITY OF PALM DESERT STANDARD DETAILS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CEQA".
2. Authorize the City Manager to publish the City of Palm Desert Standard Details and Design Guidelines on the City's website and make it available to the public.
3. Authorize the City Manager to periodically review and update these standards as necessary to keep up with operational and construction advancements.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The purpose of the City of Palm Desert Standard Details and Design Guidelines ("Standards") is to refine the existing standards and provide additional minimum standards for the design, materials, and methods of construction for common items of public and private infrastructure including, but not limited to, streets, storm drains, landscaping, traffic control devices, and streetlights.

The City adopted original standards when it incorporated in 1973, with subsequent updates in 2001, 2002, 2008, 2017 and 2019. These Standards are used by engineers, developers, contractors, and the public to construct the infrastructure throughout the City. The proposed modifications reflect the recommendations from various City Departments to incorporate best practices and helping them in their daily operations. These updates will help ensure the highest quality in public and private improvements throughout the city.

Currently, the City uses multiple sets of design details to aid in the consistency of public infrastructure construction. However, many of the details are not aligned with the Public Works Maintenance Department's practices for maintaining infrastructure on a day-to-day basis. They are also inconsistent with the General Plan and outdated relative to current industry codes and guidelines. This has led to confusion and complications among the City, engineers, designers, and contractors during permitting, construction, and ultimately with staff maintenance efforts. This update not only ensures consistency but also organizes the standards into categories (see the table below) to facilitate finding relevant information by discipline. These changes will also improve maintenance expectations, supporting staff in their day-to-day operations.

Roadway Sections:

The City has contracted with Fehr & Peers to update the General Plan’s Mobility Element, which includes reviewing current roadway sections and incorporating updated dimensions into the General Plan for consistency. It is anticipated that the update will be completed by summer 2025. Accordingly, this section will be revised next year based on the findings from the General Plan Mobility Study and incorporated into the Standard Details and Design Guidelines.

Scope of the Standards:

The Standards do not supersede the criteria or requirements contained in the Palm Desert Municipal Code (PDMC), General Plan, or State Building Codes. In the case of conflict, the more stringent requirement shall apply. These Standards are not intended to be all-encompassing for every circumstance. Some projects may require alternative designs to meet specific needs. For example, this might include how vehicles interact with multimodal transportation within the right-of-way, storm drain pipelines as they outlet into parks, or software updates to traffic signals along major corridors. The Standards, along with the PDMC and General Plan, must be consulted for potential design impacts.

Outreach and Moving Forward:

These Standards were shared with the Desert Valley Business Association and the Riverside Chapter of the Building Industry Association on April 12, 2024. They were distributed to their members for review with a request for comments or if desired, an invitation for a Question & Answer meeting, by May 1, 2024. There were no comments or requests received from either organization.

The Proposed Changes

| Standard | Why Needed | What changed |
|--|---|--|
| 1. General a. Created a table of contents and included drafting standard criteria | The original standards were grouped in their own section making access cumbersome and confusing | This update consolidated all groups into one set with a table of contents for ease in obtaining the necessary standard or detail and added acronyms and drafting standards to meet today’s software. |
| 2. Sidewalks, Driveways & Handicap Ramps | ADA ramp criteria were updated with the State standards in 2021. Parkway drainage and driveways were not consistent to accommodate the ADA walkways. | Updated the intersection and driveway ADA access ramps. |
| 3. Curb & Gutter | There were not enough options for curbs and gutters to accommodate all street standards. | Added a 6” option for Curb & Gutters. Added a Wedge Curb option for residential use to avoid cur |

City of Palm Desert
 Updated Standard Details and Design Guidelines

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| | | cutting existing curbs to allow for driveways. Added a asphalt curb option in emergency road or secondary access applications. |
| 4. Drainage | Existing nonstandard under the Sidewalk Drains in our City were failing and clogging. Drywell option was not conducive of our Valley and its blow sand. | Modified the area drains to today's standards of better controlling nuisance flows. Updated drywell standard to one that is easier to construct and maintain to help discharge water from our retention basins after the storm events. |
| 5. Monuments | Only one option of monumentation was given to tie out City streets and property. | Created standards for not only setting the property line monuments for the City but also consistent documentation for our record keeping. |
| 6. Geometrics | Standard geometric designs were not given for cul de sac and knuckle design allowing the development community to use other jurisdictions standard designs. | Established cul-de-sac geometry, knuckle geometry to be consistent with Riverside County that meets City emergency service provider's needs. |
| 7. Traffic | Standard installation of signage and traffic controller were not to today's standards. | Provide specification and design criteria to meet a consistent design and operation of City traffic signage and signals for Public Works operational needs. |
| 8. Landscaping | Landscaping was under its own section and had inconsistent material for day-to-day maintenance needs. | Consolidated the installation of landscape material and the irrigation equipment to be consistent with what we have on the shelves in City corporate yard to help with successful plant survival. |

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

Environment Review:

The City of Palm Desert (City), in its capacity as the Lead Agency for this project, finds that the project is exempt from CEQA since the proposed Standards do not alter the physical environment and qualify for a CEQA exemption under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) since there is no substantial evidence that there is any possibility that the approval of these Standards

will have a significant effect on the environment. This does not consist of a project and therefore exempt from any environmental review under CEQA.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact to the General Fund associated with adopting these Standards. However, operational savings may be realized over time, through more consistent and standardized public improvements.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. City of Palm Desert Standard Details and Design Guidelines
3. Existing Standard Details